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1125-2  
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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Patent Application

Applicant(s): Paul Owen Livesay  
Case: 1125-2  
Serial No.: 09/510,919  
Filing Date: February 22, 2000  
Group: 2134  
Examiner: David Y. Jung

I hereby certify that this paper is being deposited on this date with the U.S. Postal Service as first class mail addressed to the Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.

Signature: [Signature] Date: February 3, 2006

Title: Methods and Apparatus for Providing User Anonymity  
in Online Transactions

TRANSMITTAL LETTER

Mail Stop Amendment  
Commissioner for Patents  
P.O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Sir:

Submitted herewith is the following document relating to the above-identified patent application:

(1) Response to Restriction Requirement.

There is no additional fee due in conjunction with the Response. In the event of any non-payment or improper payment of a required fee, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge or to credit **Ryan, Mason & Lewis, LLP Deposit Account No. 50-0762** as required to correct the error.

Respectfully submitted,

[Signature]

Date: February 3, 2006

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RESPONSE TO RESTRICTION REQUIREMENT

Commissioner for Patents  
P.O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Sir:

The present application was filed on November 22, 2000 with claims 1-29. Claim 8 was canceled in an Amendment filed June 10, 2004. Claims 1-7 and 9-29 remain pending. Claims 1, 10, 11, 14, 28 and 29 are the pending independent claims.

Claims 10, 11 and 14, originally filed as dependent claims, were rewritten in independent form in the above-noted June 10, 2004 Amendment, at least in part responsive to an indication that dependent claim 10 contained allowable subject matter. See the first non-final Office Action dated March 10, 2004.

In the present Office Action dated January 3, 2006, the Examiner required restriction of pending claims 1-7 and 9-29 to one of four groups, namely, Group I comprising claims 1-7, 9, 12, 13 and 19-29, Group II comprising claim 10, Group III comprising claim 11, and Group IV comprising claims 14-18.

Applicant initially traverses the restriction requirement on the ground that it is untimely. The restriction requirement comes in a fourth Office Action in the present application, after the Examiner

has had ample opportunity to consider the claims of all of the identified groups. These claims have been considered collectively in at least the second and third Office Actions, dated January 6, 2005 and June 30, 2005, respectively. In fact, the January 6, 2005 Office Action indicated that claim 10, as rewritten in independent form, was allowable, and provided substantive prior art rejections for claims 11 and 14 as rewritten in independent form, as well as for the remaining claims. Accordingly, it is believed that claims 1-7 and 9-29 have been fully searched and considered, and that to separate them now into groups as proposed is inappropriate.

Moreover, as indicated above, at least claim 10 is in independent form because the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office ("USPTO") in the March 10, 2004 Office Action had expressly specified that this claim would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. As noted above, the claim as amended was actually allowed in the January 6, 2005 Office Action. Although the present Examiner subsequently withdrew that indication of allowable subject matter, it is clear from the previous three non-final Office Actions that searching and considering claims 10, 11 and 14-18 in conjunction with the other pending claims of the application does not represent an undue burden on the Examiner.

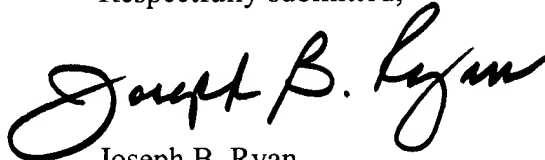
Applicant further traverses the restriction requirement on the merits, in that it is believed that the claims of the identified groups are not related as subcombinations of a single combination as alleged. For example, none of the independent claims includes all of the elements of any other independent claim, as might be expected if such claims were related in the manner alleged.

In view of the foregoing, the restriction requirement is believed to be improper and should be withdrawn. The USPTO has had ample opportunity to consider the pending claim set in its entirety, and has in fact already issued multiple Office Actions addressing the full claim set. At least claim 10 is in independent form due to an indication of allowable subject matter issued by the USPTO after consideration of the full claim set. To subject the claims to restriction at this stage of the prosecution is not only inappropriate, but it will result in a particularly inefficient use of resources for both Applicant and the USPTO.

Accordingly, Applicant expressly reserves the right to petition this restriction requirement to the Commissioner of the USPTO.

Notwithstanding the traversal, Applicant elects the pending claims of Group I, that is, claims 1-7, 9, 12, 13 and 19-29, for further prosecution, should the Examiner fail to withdraw the restriction requirement.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Joseph B. Ryan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Joseph" being the most prominent.

Date: February 3, 2006

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